


Effectiveness of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy and Psychodrama on Psychological Wellbeing in Women Involved in Marital Conflicts

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to compare the effectiveness of acceptance and commitment therapy and psychodrama on attachment and psychological well-being in women involved in marital conflicts. The research method was quasi-experimental pre- posttest study and control with a two-month follow-up phase. The population of this study was Iranian women involved in marital conflicts. The research sample was purposive and 30 study participants were randomly assigned to one of the groups of acceptance and commitment therapy intervention, psychodrama intervention and control group. Data were collected using marital conflicts questionnaire, Adulthood attachment and psychological well-being Questionnaire. The results of data analysis showed that acceptance-commitment and psychodrama interventions increase psychological wellbeing scores and decrease marital conflicts scores. While attachment scores improved in both experimental groups, only changes in avoidant attachment scores in group 1 and secure attachment scores in group 2 were significant.

Keywords: Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, Psychodrama, Marital Conflicts.

Introduction

Marital conflicts mean inconsistency in the needs and methods of satisfying them, desires, behavioral schemas, and irresponsible behavior (Glasser, 2010). Marital conflict is inherent in a way that can evoke attachment (Radulovic, 2012) and has a direct effect on psychological wellbeing. One of the most potent therapies for improving marital conflicts is acceptance and commitment therapy. This treatment helps spouses distance themselves from negative thoughts and assumptions about the relationship and make them aware of their reactions in the vicious cycle of the relationship. In the psychodrama, spouses can practice the methods of conscious and developed coping in a situation of marital conflict by playing a role (Blatner, 1996). It can also lead to change and hope for the future and increase well-being in spouses (Kamisli, et al., 2021) In the acceptance and commitment approach, the primary process is the active acceptance of inner emotions and committed action towards values in the form of a group (Hayes & Strosahl, 2004). While in the psychodrama approach, the primary process is empowerment in problem-solving, facing the situation and playing a role in here and now, and taking advantage of the group feedback (Leveton, 2001). Therefore, it is assumed that both approaches can affect marital conflicts and consequently the psychological well-being and attachment of Iranian women, were selected as therapeutic intervention in this study. The purpose of this study was to implement these two approaches on marital conflicts, well-being, and attachment of women involved in marital conflicts. The research hypothesis states that there is a significance difference

between the effectiveness of these two approaches on the style of attachment and psychological well-being of women involved in marital conflicts.

Method

The present study was quasi-experimental with pre-test and post-test method with a control group. The statistical population of the study included all Iranian women involved in marital conflicts who referred to Khomeini-Shahr counseling centers in the summer of 2020. Out of 92 completed questionnaires, 30 participants were selected by purposive sampling. To execute the project, participants whose marital conflicts score was above 79 in the marital conflicts questionnaire and also met the inclusion criteria, were selected for the sample and randomly divided into three groups (experimental group 1, experimental group 2, and control group). The participants of experimental group 1 and experimental group 2 underwent the relevant interventions. Intervention sessions were performed in groups, in eight 90-minutes sessions with each of the two experimental groups every week. Contents of acceptance-commitment therapy sessions were chosen from the "A Practical Guide to Acceptance and Commitment Therapy" book (Hayes & Strosahl, 2004) and the contents of psychodrama therapy sessions were chosen from the "A clinician's guide to psychodrama" book (Leveton, 2001). At the end of the sessions, a post-test was performed on all three groups. Also, to evaluate the persistence of the effects of the interventions, after two months, a follow-up test was performed on all three groups.

Instruments

Marital Conflicts Questionnaire-R (MCQ-R): Sanaei, et al. (2009) developed this questionnaire. In the present study, Cronbach's alpha was 0.75, for overall score.

Adult Attachment Scale (AAS): Collins and Reed (1990) developed this scale with three subscales of dependence, closeness and anxiety. In the present study, Cronbach's alpha of the subscales was 0.77, 0.79 and 0.80, respectively.

Ryff's Psychological Well-being Scales (RSPWB): Built by Ryff in 1980. In the present study, Cronbach's alpha was 0.88. for overall score.

Results

According to Table 1, the mean scores of marital conflicts in the post-test stage in the acceptance-commitment and psychodrama group decreased by 21.7 points ($p < 0.01$) and 29.5 points ($p < 0.001$), respectively, compared to the control group and was also significant in the follow up stage. The mean scores of psychological well-being in the post-test stage increased by 58.8 points ($p < 0.01$) and 31.0 points ($p < 0.05$) in the acceptance-commitment group and the psychodrama group respectively, compared to the control group. The increase in follow-up was also significant. Comparing the effectiveness of the two

treatments on marital conflicts and psychological wellbeing was not significantly different ($p < 0.05$). The mean scores of secure attachment increased in the post-test stage in the psychodrama group compared to the control group by 8.20 points, and this increase was also significant in the follow-up stage ($p < 0.05$) but was not significant in the acceptance-commitment group compare to control. Thus, psychodrama therapy was able to increase secure attachment scores. Due to the difference in avoidance attachment scores between the groups and the control group, in the pre-test stage, the pre-test scores were first controlled by analysis of covariance and then compared. The results of analysis of covariance showed that acceptance and commitment treatment was effective in reducing avoidance attachment scores and also maintained this effectiveness in follow-up Respectively, ($p < 0.001$, $F = 24.724$ and $p < 0.01$, $F = 11.001$). But psychodrama was not effective in reducing avoidant attachment scores in the post-test and follow-up stages. The difference in mean scores of anxious attachment was not significant between the experimental groups and the control group, in the post-test and follow-up stages.

Table 1. Results of LSD Post Hoc Test in all Three Variables

Variable	Stage	Comparison of Acceptance-Commitment & Control		Comparison of Psychodrama & Control		Comparison of two approaches	
		Diff. in Means (Standard Error)	Sig.	Diff. in Means (Standard Error)	Sig.	Diff. in Means (Standard Error)	Sig.
Marital Conflicts	Pre-test	3.90- (6.51)	0.544	4.30- (6.51)	0.515	0.40- (6.51)	0.951
	Post-test	21.70- (6.45)	0.002	29.50- (6.45)	0.000	7.80- (6.45)	0.237
	Follow-up	22.30- (5.99)	0.001	29.60- (5.99)	0.000	7.30- (5.99)	0.234
Psychological Well-being	Pre-test	21.70(15.99)	0.176	1.20- (15.99)	0.941	22.90- (15.99)	0.164
	Post-test	58.80(14.96)	0.001	31.0(14.96)	0.048	27.80- (14.96)	0.074
	Follow-up	63.20(14.92)	0.000	32.80(14.92)	0.037	30.40- (14.92)	0.052
Secure Attachment	Pre-test	0.300- (4.40)	0.946	6.00(4.40)	0.184	6.30(4.40)	0.164
	Post-test	2.50(4.01)	0.538	8.20(4.01)	0.049	5.70(4.01)	0.166
	Follow-up	1.80(4.06)	0.661	8.20(4.062)	0.049	6.40(4.062)	0.127
Avoidant Attachment	Pre-test	13.30(5.53)	0.023	10.80(5.53)	0.061	2.50- (5.53)	0.655
	Post-test	0.50(4.45)	0.911	3.80(4.45)	0.401	3.30(4.45)	0.465
	Follow-up	3.60- (4.35)	0.416	2.60- (4.35)	0.556	1.00(4.35)	0.820
Anxious Attachment	Pre-test	4.30(6.583)	0.519	7.10(6.58)	0.290	2.80(6.58)	0.674
	Post-test	7.90- (5.121)	0.135	3.60- (5.12)	0.488	4.30(5.12)	0.409
	Follow-up	9.00- (4.919)	0.078	6.10- (4.92)	0.226	2.90(4.92)	0.560

Discussion and Conclusion

The results showed that these two treatments have a positive effect on marital conflict and well-being in women and are significant in some attachment styles. The Impact of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy on Conflict and Wellbeing By improving avoidance, acceptance, and commitment, one achieves self-

awareness and values that matter. And it makes a difference in your life through planning, goal setting, and effective relationships and personal growth. In psychodrama, expressing emotions, emotional emptiness, and empathy creates a strong empathetic approach. In addition to displaying conflict situations and understanding the similarity of these situations between spouses, it promotes marital conflict. Due to the effectiveness of the interventions, it is suggested that the protocols of this study be used to improve the relationship between spouses. It is also suggested that interventions be used according to the attachment of individuals. One of the limitations of the study was the lack of double-blind interventions, which increases the likelihood of positive representation among participants.

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Conflicts of interest

Authors found no conflict of interests.



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